38TH ANNUAL INLAND NORTHWEST

RV SHOW

Official SHOW GUIDE!

Produced by the Exchange

Jan 22-25

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The 38th Annual Inland Northwest RV Show and Sale is back… January 22-25, at the Spokane Fairgrounds. Don't buy an RV until you compare the prices at this show. This is one of our biggest RV shows ever. Six gigantic dealers have filled the Spokane Fair & Expo Center with over 150,000 sq.ft. of gleaming RV's and accessories. Don't miss the tunnel that leads to the AG buildings, so you see the entire show.

The Inland Northwest RV show hosts the biggest RV dealers in the area. They bring the best of their inventory and compete for your business. The prices will never be better. Hundreds of RV's are on display, both inside the fairgrounds and outside. Whether this is your first time to the RV show or you have come to it for 38 years, there is something for everyone. From pop-up campers to the monster motorhomes to sleek new vans, you will find your perfect RV. Don't forget to check out all the booth vendors. They offer lots of accessories for your RV. Additionally, we have several resorts at the show so you will never run out of places to go with your family. If you do buy an RV at the Show, you will get 30 seconds in the Brandon Cannon Farmers Insurance Cash Machine to grab all the cash you can. How good are you at catching flying money? You will also have a chance to win a great trip: "The Fly Away" includes airfare for two to San Diego, two nights hotel and two tickets to The Park Festival on April 11th. Brought to you by "93.7 The Mountain".

Have a great time, thank you for attending.
Chris Cody, Show Director

38TH ANNUAL INLAND NORTHWEST
RV SHOW
Show Director: Chris Cody
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The Shakedown Trip:
How to Make Mistakes Close to Home, but where the Neighbors can't See You

You just bought an RV. Congratulations! You've watched the YouTube videos, you've joined three Facebook groups, and you've already mentally planned a trip to Yellowstone.

Put the brakes on that dream for just a moment.

Before you head out on any adventure that requires a map, a reservation, or more than a quarter tank of gas, you need to take a shakedown trip and trust me, the name is appropriate. You're going to shake out the kinks, shake your head a few times, and possibly shake your fist at an appliance that refuses to cooperate.

The shakedown trip isn't glamorous. It's not Instagram-worthy. But it might be the most important trip you ever take in your RV, because we are going to make sure that everything that's going to go wrong will go wrong close enough to home so that you can fix it without turning a vacation into a crisis.

WHAT EXACTLY IS A SHAKEDOWN TRIP?

A shakedown trip is a short, low-stakes overnight (or weekend) camping trip specifically designed to test your RV, your gear, and yourself. The destination should be close to home, ideally within 30 to 45 minutes, and the campground should have full hookups. This isn't the time to test your boondocking skills.

Think of it as a dress rehearsal where forgetting your lines doesn't ruin the show.

The goal isn't to have a great time (though you might). The goal is to discover what doesn't work, what you forgot, what you don't understand, and what's going to drive you crazy, all while you're close enough to run to the hardware store or, in a worst-case scenario, just go home and try again next weekend.

WHY EVEN EXPERIENCED RVers NEED ONE

"But I've owned RVs before," you might say. "I know what I'm doing."

Respectfully: no, you don't. Not with this RV.

Every RV is different. The water pump switch is in a new location. The awning has a different mechanism. The black tank valve is on the opposite side. The slideouts have a mind of their own. That fancy new touchscreen panel that controls everything? It has a learning curve—one that your teenager will conquer in five minutes while you're still looking for the power button.

And if this is a larger RV than you've owned before? The learning curve isn't just about systems—it's about physics. That extra five feet matters when you're navigating a gas station. Those extra few thousand pounds matter when you're stopping. And those extra inches of height matter when you meet a low-clearance bridge that wasn't on your GPS.

THE RV IS READY, BUT ARE YOU?

Here's an uncomfortable truth: your RV probably works fine. Most problems on the shakedown trip are operator error.

While you still have visions of pulling out of the driveway and confidently navigating your new luxury apartment on wheels through the neighborhood, the reality of the situation is that you are going to spend 45 minutes trying to figure out why the trailer lights aren't working (the plug wasn't fully seated). When you finally put your RV in gear and pull forward, you hear a horrifying crunch because you forgot to retract the stabilizer jacks. All the while your spouse is standing in the street making hand signals you don't understand, and the neighbor's kid is filming the whole thing for what you can only assume will become a viral TikTok.

Don't take it personally. There's simply no way to remember everything from your walkthrough at the dealership. You were excited, overwhelmed, signing papers, and nodding along while someone pointed at valves and switches for an hour. You retained maybe 40% of it, and that's being generous.

The shakedown trip is where the other 60% actually sinks in, because you're doing it yourself, probably getting it wrong, and then figuring out why.

Shakedown Trip Part 1 - What can be tested at home?

There are many things that can be tested at home before even heading to the campground, let's tackle those first.

Water System

This can be checked while still parked in your driveway. First fill your fresh water tank, not only will this give you an idea of how long it takes to fill, it's also going to let you test your water pump when you don't have the pressure of city water. This is also your first chance to check for water leaks. Check all the lines, connections at sinks for drips, take a shower if you'd like, and flush the toilets. Don't "use" the toilets yet, right now we are just checking water lines and black & gray tanks for leaks. If everything checks out fine you can move on to phase 2 which is hooking up to city water and evaluating the system when it's under water pressure. Check all the same things that you checked before, make sure nothing leaks. One piece of advice, invest in a pressure regulator, campground water pressure varies wildly, and too much pressure can damage your plumbing.

Electrical System

Also while still in the driveway you can test some of your electrical system. Running an extension cord from the house and plugging it into your RV will let you check most things running at lower amperage. You can test your microwave, TV, outlets, electric water heater, etc., but not the AC, that's just going to pop your circuit, you might get away with testing on a 20amp circuit if you have one, but waiting until you are at a campground with a 30 or 50amp service is the better time to check your AC is operating as intended. Once that is all working, then unplug and run on battery power for a few hours. What actually works? What drains the battery faster than you expected?

Test your converter (which charges your batteries when plugged in) and your inverter (which lets you run household outlets off battery power), if you have one, test all the same items running on battery power as you did when you were plugged into shore power.

If you're towing and have a trailer, confirm your 7-pin connector is working properly: running lights, brake lights, turn signals, and electric brakes.

LP Gas System

Your stove, furnace, water heater, and possibly your refrigerator run on propane. Test them all. Light every burner on the stove. Run the furnace long enough to confirm it actually heats. Switch your water heater to LP mode and

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make sure you get hot water. If your fridge can run on LP, test that mode.

A word of caution: don't just check that these things turn on. A burner that ignites but burns yellow instead of blue has a problem. A furnace that lights but short-cycles has a problem. These are things you want to discover now.

Slides and Awnings

Extend your slideouts. Retract your slideouts. Extend them again. Get comfortable with the controls and watch the slides as they move. Are they traveling smoothly? Any unusual noises? Do the seals look right when they're extended?

Same with the awning. Extend it, adjust it, retract it. Learn how to secure it. Learn what the wind limits are (most manufacturers say to retract the awning if winds exceed 15-20 mph, and they're not kidding—wind damage to awnings is one of the most common RV repairs).

SHAKEDOWN TRIP PART 2 - TESTING AT THE CAMPGROUND

Sewer Hookups

Let's discuss the dark underbelly in the RV world…the black tank! We'll also discuss the gray tank, water hookups, and order of operations, and order is very important as you'll learn. The sewer hookup process is straightforward once you've done it a few times: connect your sewer hose to your RV's outlet, connect the other end to the campground's sewer connection, and when your tank is full, pull the valve to drain.

Black & Gray Tanks

Eager to test everything, you pull the black tank valve right after hooking up, planning to just leave it open so the tank drains continuously. This seems efficient. It is a mistake.

Liquids drain faster than solids. If you leave the valve open, the liquids flow out immediately, leaving the solids behind to dry and accumulate in your tank. This is called "the pyramid of doom" in RV circles, and it's exactly as unpleasant as it sounds. The correct process: keep the black tank valve closed until the tank is at least two-thirds full, then drain it all at once. The volume and velocity of the liquid helps flush everything out. Always drain black first, then gray (the tank from your sinks and shower)—the gray water helps rinse the hose.

THE LEVELING LEARNING CURVE

RVs need to be level to function properly. Your refrigerator (especially if it's an absorption fridge running on LP) needs to be level to work correctly. Your sleep quality suffers on a tilted mattress. Doors swing open or closed on their own. That glass of wine on the counter becomes a glass of wine on the floor.

Most campsite pads are not perfectly level. Some aren't even close.

If you have an auto-leveling system, learn how to use it before you leave home. Read the manual. Watch a video specific to your system. Know what surface it can and can't handle.

If you're using leveling blocks (and you should have them even if you have an auto-leveling system, as a backup), practice in your driveway. Figure out how many blocks you need to drive onto. Get comfortable with your spotter guiding you forward.

Shakedown trip discovery: you will either overshoot or undershoot the blocks multiple times. Your spotter will get frustrated with you. You will get frustrated with your spotter. This is a rite of passage.

THE "OH NO, IT'S DARK" SITUATION

Plan to arrive at your shakedown campsite in daylight. Then, when something inevitably delays you and you arrive after dark, you'll learn an important lesson about having a good flashlight accessible.

Setting up an RV in the dark is an adventure. Your hookup connections are in shadows. Your leveling blocks are invisible. The step you forgot that you already extended is lying in wait for your shins.

By the end of your shakedown trip, you'll have identified three things:

1. Where you're going to mount a better exterior light
2. Where you're going to keep a flashlight that's always within reach
3. Why experienced RVers have headlamps

THE TEARDOWN: DID YOU CLOSE THAT?

Packing up and leaving a campsite is where new RV owners make the most expensive mistakes.

Before you move your RV—before you even start the engine—walk around it. Then walk around it again. Then have someone else walk around it.

Check for:

- Slideouts retracted
- Awning retracted and secured
- Stabilizer jacks up
- Entry steps retracted

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- All exterior compartment doors closed and latched
- Shore power disconnected and cord stored
- Sewer hose disconnected and stored
- Water hose disconnected and stored
- TV antenna down (if applicable)
- Any chairs, rugs, or gear outside that belongs to you

The RV community calls this the "walkthrough" or the "idiot check," and nobody is above needing it. Experienced RVers with decades on the road still do a walkthrough before every departure, because the one time you skip it is the time you drive away with the awning out.

WHAT TO BRING ON YOUR SHAKEDOWN TRIP

You're testing the RV, but you're also testing your gear and your packing. Here's a baseline:

Essentials (that don't come with the RV)

- Leveling blocks and/or pads
- Wheel chocks
- Fresh water hose (white or blue, not a garden hose—garden hoses can leach chemicals)
- Water pressure regulator
- Inline water filter
- Sewer hose (10-15 feet minimum, and bring a spare or extension)
- Sewer hose support (keeps the hose at a proper angle for drainage)
- Electrical adapters (30 amp to 15 amp, 50 amp to 30 amp, whatever your rig needs)
- Surge protector or EMS (Electrical Management System)
- Flashlight or headlamp
- Basic tool kit
- Duct tape (it's a cliché because it's true)
- For Testing Purposes
- Enough groceries to actually cook a meal (This is where you learn that your pizza pan doesn't fit into the oven)
- Enough clothes for the weather
- Bedding you plan to use (test for comfort and temperature)
- All your toiletries (do they fit where you planned?)
- Any entertainment or gear you'd normally bring
- For When Things Go Wrong
- The RV's manual (not buried in a compartment but accessible)
- Your dealer's contact information
- Roadside assistance information
- A basic first aid kit
- A notepad (write down everything that doesn't work, needs adjustment, or confuses you)

TAKE NOTES (SERIOUSLY)

By the end of your shakedown trip, you're going to have a list. That slightly leaky faucet. The cabinet door that doesn't latch properly. The weird noise the water heater makes when it first kicks on. The thing you forgot to pack. The system you still don't understand. ***Write it all down. Take photos. Take videos of anything weird.***

Some items on your list will be warranty issues—take those back to the dealer. Some will be things you can fix or adjust yourself. Some will be items you need to buy. Some will be notes for next time.

This list is gold. It's the whole point of the trip. Embrace it.

THE SECOND SHAKEDOWN TRIP

Yes, there should probably be a second one.

After you've addressed the issues from your first trip—after you've fixed the leak and bought the gear you forgot and figured out the control panel—go again. Same rules: close to home, full hookups, low stakes.

This trip is about confirming that your fixes worked and practicing your routines. Setup should be faster. Teardown should be smoother. You should feel a little more confident.

If you discover new issues, that's fine. Better to find them now.

By the end of your second shakedown trip, you should feel ready for an actual destination. Not a cross-country epic—maybe start with a three or four night trip, a few hours from home. Build your confidence and your systems gradually.

IT'S SUPPOSED TO BE FUN (EVENTUALLY)

Here's the thing about shakedown trips: they're not always fun in the moment, but they're incredibly valuable. Every mistake you make on a shakedown trip is a mistake you don't make at Yellowstone, or on a rainy night in an unfamiliar campground, or with the whole family watching.

And there's a certain satisfaction in figuring things out. The first time your setup goes smoothly, the first time you nail the leveling on the first try, the first time you hook up without any leaks or sparks or cursing—that feels genuinely good.

So before you book that dream trip, book a weekend at a campground twenty minutes from home. Make your mistakes where they don't matter. Learn your RV's quirks while you can still Google the answer from your driveway.▪

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The New RV Owner's Gear Checklist: What Doesn't Come With Your RV

Written by Pat McHale, The Exchange

You just bought an RV. It's shiny. It's exciting. It's also missing some essentials.

RVs roll off the lot ready to drive, but not necessarily ready to camp. The gear that connects you to water, sewer, and electricity? That's on you. So is the stuff that keeps your RV level, your tires from rolling, and your electrical system from frying.

There was a line here and I accidentally deleted it and need it back

WATER SYSTEM

Fresh Water Hose: Don't use a regular garden hose. Garden hoses can leach chemicals and leave a plastic taste in your water. Buy a hose specifically designed for potable (drinking) water, they're usually white or blue and labeled "drinking water safe." A 25-foot hose handles most situations; some people carry a 50-foot as backup.

Water Pressure Regulator: Campground water pressure varies wildly. Too much pressure can damage your RV's plumbing, blow fittings, or cause leaks. A pressure regulator attaches between the spigot and your hose, limiting pressure to a safe level (usually 40-50 PSI). They're inexpensive insurance against expensive repairs.

Inline Water Filter: Campground water quality also varies. An inline filter connects to your hose and removes sediment, chlorine taste, and other impurities. Basic filters are affordable; upgraded carbon filters do more. Either beats drinking straight from an unknown source. *Editor's Note:* If you were born before 1999, you can skip this section and save some money. We are used to drinking from garden hoses, and while it's not the best option, it sure is nostalgic!

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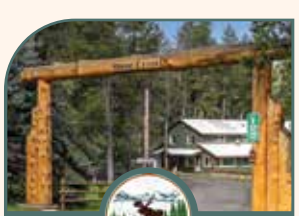

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SEWER SYSTEM

Sewer Hose: This is non-negotiable, as you need a way to empty your tanks. Most RVers recommend at least 15-20 feet of hose to reach campground sewer connections. Buy a quality hose with secure fittings; cheap hoses leak, and that's exactly as unpleasant as it sounds. Many people carry a backup hose or extension.

Sewer Hose Support: A support keeps your hose at a proper downward angle so everything flows toward the sewer connection instead of pooling in low spots. It also keeps the hose off the ground, which campgrounds appreciate and some require.

ELECTRICAL SYSTEM

Surge Protector or EMS: Campground electrical pedestals can have wiring problems such as voltage spikes, low voltage, reversed polarity, open grounds. Any of these can damage your RV's electronics, appliances, and electrical system. A surge protector guards against spikes. An Electrical Management System (EMS) monitors for multiple problems and cuts power before damage occurs. This is one of the most important investments you can make.

Adapters (dogbone adapters): Your RV has either a 30-amp or 50-amp plug, but not every campsite matches. A 30-amp to 50-amp adapter lets you plug a 30-amp RV into a 50-amp pedestal. A 50-amp to 30-amp adapter does the reverse (though you'll be limited to 30 amps of power). A 30-amp to standard household (15/20-amp) adapter lets you plug in at home for battery charging and basic testing. Carry the adapters your setup might need.

LEVELING AND STABILIZING

Leveling Blocks: Most campsites aren't perfectly level, and RVs need to be level to function properly. Your refrigerator, your sleep quality, and your sanity all depend on it. Leveling blocks (stackable plastic platforms you drive onto) let you raise the low side. Even RVs with auto-leveling systems should carry manual blocks as backup.

Wheel Chocks: Once you're parked and level, you don't want the RV to roll. Wheel chocks wedge against your tires to keep everything in place. Use them every time, even on flat ground.

THE EXTRAS THAT BECOME ESSENTIALS

Flashlight or Headlamp: You will set up in the dark at some point. Hookups, leveling blocks, and sewer connections are much easier to deal with when you can see them—and have both hands free.

Basic Tool Kit: Screwdrivers, pliers, adjustable wrench, electrical tape, duct tape. RVs rattle, things loosen, and small repairs happen.

RV-specific Toilet Paper: It breaks down faster than household toilet paper, which matters for your black tank. You can test regular toilet paper by shaking a piece in a jar of water—if it dissolves quickly, it's fine. If not, buy the RV stuff.

BEFORE YOU LEAVE THE DRIVEWAY

New RV owners often ask *"Why doesn't the dealer include this stuff?"*

Some dealers do offer starter kits, but they may not contain everything that you want. Essentials mean different things to different people.

Buy this gear before your first trip, not on the way to the campground when you realize you're missing something. Your shakedown trip should test your RV and your systems, not your ability to find a camping store at 8 PM— but if you do find yourself at a camping supply store at 8 PM, buy a headlamp too!▪

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Portable Power Stations: The Extension Cord You Can Take Anywhere

Written by Pat McHale, The Exchange

You've seen them at Costco. You've seen the van/ RV Life YouTubers touting their greatness. If you're getting into RVing, you've probably wondered: do I need one of these things?

The short answer: you don't need one, but once you have one, you'll wonder how you lived without it.

WHAT IS A PORTABLE POWER STATION?

Think of it as a big, silent, rechargeable battery with outlets built in. Unlike a generator, there's no gas, no fumes, no pull cord, and no noise. You charge it at home (or with solar panels, or in your vehicle), and you've got portable electricity you can use anywhere.

Most units have a mix of outlets: standard household AC outlets, USB ports (both USB-A and USB-C), and 12V DC outlets like your car's cigarette lighter. Some newer models even have wireless charging pads built in.

Why RVers Love Them

Portable power stations shine in the gaps, for the situations where you're not plugged into shore power but still need electricity.

Overnight stops at Walmart parking lots or rest areas. Keep your CPAP running, your phone charged, and a fan circulating without draining your RV's house batteries or firing up a generator at midnight.

Day trips away from the RV. Take it on the boat for the fish finder and Bluetooth speaker. Bring it to the beach with a powered cooler. Set up at a tailgate and blend margaritas.

Backup power when things go wrong: a dead converter, weak house batteries, or a broken campground pedestal.

Home use during power outages, in the garage, or for backyard movie nights. Most people end up using their power station at home more than they expected.

Making Sense of Watts

Two numbers matter: capacity and output. *Capacity* (measured in watt-hours, Wh) is how much total energy the battery holds, or the size of your gas tank. *Output* (measured in watts, W) is how much power it can deliver at once, or how big the pipe is.

A station with 1,000 Wh capacity but only 500W output can run a 500-watt appliance for about two hours, but it can't run a 700-watt appliance at all.

Real-world examples:

- Phone charger: 5-20W (any power station handles this easily)
- Laptop: 50-100W
- CPAP machine: 30-60W
- Portable fan: 20-50W
- Mini fridge or powered cooler: 40-60W
- Microwave or coffee maker: 600-1,200W (needs a larger unit, drains fast)
- RV air conditioner: 1,200-2,000W+ (this is where portable power stations tap out)

The takeaway: portable power stations handle small and medium loads great. They struggle with anything that heats or cools.

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SIZING GUIDE

Small (200-400 Wh) — 5-10 pounds: Best for charging phones, tablets, running small fans and LED lights. Think of it as a bigger phone power bank.

Medium (500-1,000 Wh) — 10-25 pounds: The sweet spot for most RVers. Handles CPAP, overnight trips, small coolers, laptops, and multiple devices over a weekend. Portable enough for one person to carry.

Large (1,000-2,000 Wh) — 25-50 pounds: Runs small appliances like blenders, powers a mini fridge for extended periods, serves as serious backup power.

Extra Large (2,000+ Wh) — 50-80+ pounds: Home backup territory. Can run microwaves and power tools. Less "grab and go," more stationary powerhouse.

Features Worth Looking For

Pure sine wave inverter. Produces clean power safe for sensitive electronics like laptops and CPAP machines. Modified sine wave inverters (found in cheaper units) can damage some devices.

Multiple outlet types. AC outlets, USB-A, USB-C with Power Delivery, and 12V DC give you flexibility.

Multiple charging inputs. Wall, car, and solar—ideally simultaneously for faster recharging.

Good display screen. Shows input/output wattage, remaining capacity, and charging status so you're not guessing.

Expandable batteries. Some brands offer add-on battery packs to increase capacity later without buying a whole new system.

Brands You'll See

Names like Jackery, Bluetti, EcoFlow, Goal Zero, Anker, and Rockpals are common at outdoor retailers and RV shows. Each has different strengths, such as portability, capacity, fast charging, expandability, or budget pricing. *A note:* Mentioning these brands isn't an endorsement. The market is crowded and changing fast. Do your homework, read user reviews, compare specs, and look at warranty terms. What's right for a weekend camper isn't necessarily right for a full-timer.

The Solar Connection

Most portable power stations can charge from solar panels, letting you recharge off-grid. The reality check: solar charging is slower than wall charging and depends on conditions. A panel's rated wattage is under perfect conditions—real-world output is typically 60-80% of that on sunny days, less when cloudy. For most people just getting started, the power station itself is the priority purchase. Solar panels can be added later once you know how you actually use the unit.

BEYOND THE RV: POWERED COOLERS AND FUN STUFF

Powered coolers (from brands like Dometic, Engel, and Alpicool) are portable refrigerators that plug in instead of using ice. Most draw 40-60 watts, so a medium power station runs one for hours.

The magic combo: a powered cooler and a portable power station at the beach, on the boat, or at a tailgate. Cold drinks all day, no melting ice, plus USB ports for your phone and Bluetooth speaker. It's a self-contained comfort station you can set up anywhere.

What It Won't Do

It won't replace shore power. You're not running your RV's air conditioning off a portable power station for any meaningful length of time. This is a supplement, not a substitute. It doesn't like extreme temperatures. Lithium batteries don't charge well in cold and degrade faster in heat. It has a lifespan. Most are rated for 500-2,000+ charge cycles before capacity drops. That's years of typical use, but not forever.

What to Budget

- Small (200-400 Wh): $150-$350
- Medium (500-1,000 Wh): $400-$800
- Large (1,000-2,000 Wh): $800-$1,500
- Extra Large (2,000+ Wh): $1,500-$3,500+

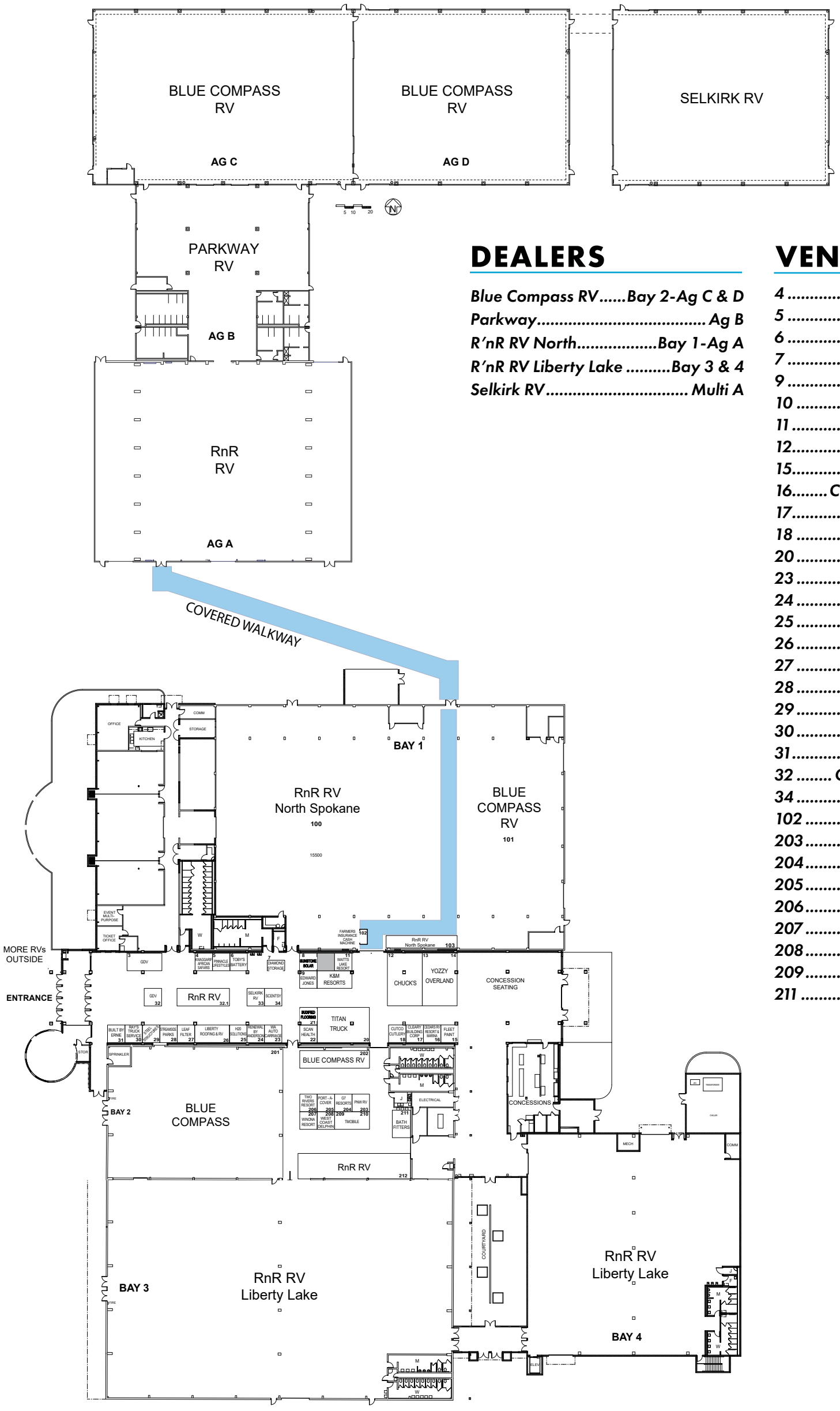
Solar panels add $100-$400 each. Watch for sales, vendors often offer better prices at RV shows.

For most RVers, a medium-sized unit (500-1,000 Wh) from a reputable brand is a solid starting point. It handles common use cases without breaking the bank or your back. ▪

ANNUAL INLAND NORTHWEST

RV SHOW

MAP & VENDOR LIST



DEALERS

Blue Compass RV.....Bay 2-Ag C & D
Parkway.....Ag B
R'nR RV North.....Bay 1-Ag A
R'nR RV Liberty Lake .....Bay 3 & 4
Selkirk RV.....Multi A

VENDORS

4 ..... Kwaggarif African Safaris
5 ..... Pinnacle Lifestyles
6 ..... Toby's Battery
7 .....Diamond Storage
9 .....Edward Jones
10 ..... KM Resorts of America
11 ..... Waitts Lake Resort
12.....Chuck's RV
15.....Fleet Painting
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